



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
GREAT LAKES NATIONAL PROGRAM OFFICE  
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

**DEC 14 2009**

Mail Code: G-17J

Mr. Mel Visser  
2001 Schuring Road  
Portage, Michigan 49024

Dear Mr. Visser:

Thank you for your letter to Administrator Jackson dated November 24, 2009, regarding toxaphene contamination in Lake Superior. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is very concerned about toxaphene contamination in Lake Superior and continues to work in collaboration with our federal, state, tribal, international, and nongovernmental partners to address toxaphene releases and sources.

Your letter requests that EPA issue a multi-state fish consumption advisory for the Lake Superior waters of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan calling for limited consumption of sport fish. It should be pointed out that state and tribal governments have primary responsibility for issuing sport fish consumption advice; it is generally not a policy of EPA to issue fish consumption advice. However, federal and state resource agencies have identified elevated toxaphene levels in Lake Superior, and potential toxaphene-related health effects, as a priority in numerous forums and reports, such as the Lake Superior Lakewide Management Plan (LaMP), and the State of Michigan's Toxaphene Health Consultation. As part of the Lake Superior Binational Program, the U.S. and Canada identified toxaphene as one of the nine critical pollutants targeted for zero discharge to the Lake Superior ecosystem by 2020. The Zero Discharge Demonstration Program continues to be one of the highest priorities of the Lake Superior Binational Program and LaMP.

In addition, several actions are currently underway in Lake Superior to better understand toxaphene levels in a variety of media, including fish, water and sediment. In addition to the Great Lakes National Program Office's routine monitoring of toxaphene in whole fish, we expect that toxaphene will be a monitoring priority in the 2011 year of Lake Superior Cooperative Monitoring. It is our understanding that the governments of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan also intend to intensify their fish sampling efforts for Lake Superior.

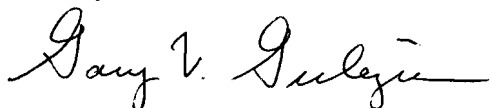
The State of Michigan has outlined their intentions with regard to toxaphene in their 2009 Health Consultation entitled: "Technical Support Document for a Toxaphene Reference Dose as a Basis for Fish Consumption Screening Values." In this document, Michigan establishes a Public Health Action Plan that includes revising their fish consumption advisory for toxaphene;

sampling and analyzing fish for toxaphene; developing methods for specific congeners of toxaphene; and sharing the information collected with other relevant groups. The states of Wisconsin and Minnesota have expressed interest in evaluating the approach Michigan is undertaking.

Finally, as part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, EPA intends to support state and tribal fish advisory programs. A "Request for Proposals" was released on November 23, 2009, in which EPA anticipates proposals from Great Lakes states and tribes, to improve and enhance their fish consumption advisory programs. These enhancement efforts could presumably include toxaphene advisory efforts. EPA intends to work closely with the states and tribes to ensure appropriate protection of fish consumers.

Again, thank you for your letter. We appreciate your interest in toxaphene contamination in Lake Superior and welcome further dialogue on this issue. If you have any questions, please contact me at 312-886-5870, or Jackie Fisher, Great Lakes National Program Office Environmental Health Coordinator, the staff contact, at (312) 353-1481.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gary V. Gulezian".

Gary V. Gulezian  
Director

Original letter mailed to:

Mr. Mel Visser  
Mr. Dave Dempsey  
Mr. Samuel Yamin